

# When is an ounce not an ounce?

**By Roger Boye**

SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

**T**oday's column answers more questions from Chicago Tribune readers.

**Q**—I've noticed that some companies sell gold by the "troy ounce" while others sell by the "ounce." Which is better?

**T.R., Elmhurst**

**A**—There should be no difference. Dealers almost always use troy weights when describing coins made with precious metals. A troy ounce contains 480 grains while most consumer products are measured in the avoirdupois system, where an ounce equals 437.5 grains.

**Q**—Someone wrote "Good Luck Ringo Starr" on my dollar bill and also drew a star. Would it be worth anything?

**W.C., Clearwater, Fla.**

**A**—\$1, its face amount. Extraneous marks on paper money almost never enhance a bill's value.

**Q**—What can you tell me about a nickel that has a blank "quarter-moon" area on its right side? A bit of the design is missing.

**F.H., Highland Park**

**A**—Most likely, your nickel wasn't centered properly while in the coining press. Such off-center Jeffersons might retail in the \$3 to \$5 range on the hobby market.